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PROFESSOR BLAU ON THE BIBLE AS A BOOK¹.

It is not often that a monograph printed in the "Program" of a Seminary attains as much literary merit or is of such fascinating interest as that now under review. Those who, while admiring the plodding industry and formidable statistics displayed by Dr. Christian Ginsburg in his Massoretic labours on the Hebrew Bible, have too often felt that they lacked something in scholarship, will welcome Dr. Blau's new booklet. It is eminently critical and "wissenschaftlich," and though its 200 pages are complete in itself, the monograph is only the first² of a series of studies of the Hebrew Text, which, if they carry out the promise of the "Buchwesen," will be really epoch-making.

In the present volume, the learned Professor treats of the externals of the Hebrew Bible, dispassionately and without bias, as though himself an outsider. The conclusions to which he arrives largely support the authenticity of the traditional text, but it is by the scholar's, not the theologian's road that he travels. Though his subject is ancient Hebrew books in general, the "althebräische Bücher" with which he deals are almost exclusively biblical. The authorities he quotes are hardly less ancient. With some display of self-denial he limits himself to original Talmud literature—Mishna, Midrash, and Gemara. To him even the minor treatises Soferim (or rather, as he points out, "Sefarim") and Sefer Tora seem too modern; they are post-talmudic, and like the corpus of the Massora only to be used where they quote earlier and original authorities which have been lost. The principle is a good one. He will have nothing of hearsay evidence, and only uses secondary evidence where that at first hand is quite unavailable. Accordingly most of the authorities cited are at least 1800 years old. At that date, the author maintains, no new-fangled notions of Hellenism influenced the conservatism applied by Orientals to public copies of the Scriptures. It was only in the twelfth century that R. Jacob Tam, and after him R. Asher b. Jechiel, discussed whether modern methods might not be applied in the preparation of scrolls for the Synagogue.

With mediaeval MSS., of which the earliest dated one is a codex

¹ *Studien zum althebräischen Buchwesen und zur biblischen Literaturgeschichte*, von Prof. Dr. Ludwig Blau, Budapest, 1902. Printed with the twenty-fifth annual report of the Landes-Rabbiner Schule at Budapest.

² The author's *Zur Einleitung in die Heilige Schrift* to some extent covers the same ground as the projected series.

of the Prophets of St. Petersburg of 915 A.D.¹, the author does not concern himself. His task it is to reconstruct the form of a book such as would have been written and used by the ancient Hebrews of Bible times. Such a book would generally be a part of Scripture, but it might also have been a translation, or apocryphal, or a Midrash² and very rarely not Jewish at all or even un-Jewish. The author claims that here he is breaking new ground, and he does not scruple to suggest a hypothesis where facts fail him. Birt and Wattenbach are his chief sources for classical bookmaking in general, though the Hebrews were even more reticent than the Greeks and Romans about the outsides of their books. Their culture was not inferior to that of their classical contemporaries but their conservatism preserved for them a far older archetypal text than even Homer succeeded in retaining.

The following précis of the work was prepared for the writer's personal use, but as the subject, though unfamiliar, is of great importance for Bible criticism, it has been suggested that it might be of service to English readers generally. It is only a précis and, of course, lays no claim to originality.

I.

Blau first deals with the outward form of the books:—

- (a) Their material.
- (b) Shape.
- (c) Length.
- (d) Size ("Format").
- (e) Distribution.
- (f) The archetypal and oldest MSS.

(a) The first MATERIAL used was stone (see Job xix. 24) covered with chalk. The word for writing meant engraving or scratching (חָקַק, חָרַת) and the pen was a graver. Ezek. iv. 1 knew bricks as writing-material, and Jer. xvii. 13 earthenware or pottery; wooden and perhaps metal tablets must also have been used (Num. xvii. 17, Ezek. xxxvii. 15, and 1 Macc. xiv. 26). Such materials, however, though useful for the legislator and recorder, were not applicable to literature, and there must have been some more pliant material for the "Sefer." סֵפֶר occurs 182 times in the Bible, and its writer the סוֹפֵר 48 times. כָּתַב, the common word for writing, occurs 220 times, whereas all its five other synonyms occur but very rarely. What was the writing-material? It was in such general use that it is never

¹ A facsimile of a Hebrew Arabic document of 831 from the Geniza appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle*.

² Agada אגדה אגדה.

mentioned, but it could only have been leather or papyrus. Skins were common enough among a pastoral folk like the Israelites, and papyrus grew in the neighbourhood of Gennesaret. But Dr. Blau rejects Strack's view and unhesitatingly pronounces for leather. Herodotus and Diodorus witness that the Persians and other barbarians wrote on oxhide, and even in Egypt leather preceded papyrus. In the sixth century B.C. the Athenians wrote Homer on wooden tablets and skins. The letter of Aristeas, written 200 B.C., describes the sacred scrolls brought to Egypt for the purposes of the Septuagint Translation as having been upon "*διφθέπαις*," the Hebrew characters illuminated in gold, and the "leather wondrously prepared and with invisible seams between the skins¹." The earliest post-biblical literature of the Jews frequently mentions papyrus but unanimously condemns its use for ritual purposes. *ספר* originally meant the rubbed surface of the skin from which the hair had been scratched off. Frequent references to the writing-materials of the Greeks in Jewish literature show that papyrus was very cheap, and quite commonly used by the Jews, not only for writing but for domestic utensils and even shoes. Acknowledgements of debt, receipts, bonds, &c., were frequently written on potsherds, but also on papyrus. John ii. 12 speaks of not writing with ink and paper, and the frequent injunctions of the Rabbis not to write Bible texts on papyrus show that in the first century papyrus must have been frequently used.

There were three kinds of writing-skins, generally deer-skin²:—

- (1) גויל or עור Leather for *ס"ח*, with the hair off but none of the skin peeled off.
- (2) קלף parchment of split skin, Aramaic parchment.
- (3) דוכסוסטום *ξυστός, ξυστός*, formerly adjective for קלף, a Greek parchment.

The Gaon Hai distinguished (2) and (3) thus:—קלף was the outer hair side, דוכסוסטום the inner flesh side. Both were to be written on the "Spaltseite" the side of cleavage. But he is probably wrong, and (2) is the inner skin when cleft from the flesh side, and (3) is the middle skin when cleft from both flesh and hair side.

Jews remained through the Middle Ages adept preparers of parch-

¹ Mr. Thackeray (*J. Q. R.*, XV, 370) translates "the previous parchments, whereon was inscribed the law in gold in the Jewish characters, the material being wonderfully prepared, and the joining of the several leaves being rendered imperceptible." He suggests that *διαφόποις* has come into the text through dittography of *διφθέπαις*.

² J. Meg., 74 d 53, gazelle-skin; Bab. Bat., 14a, calf-skin; J. Sab., 14c 15, fowl-skin; Kelim, 10. 1, fish-skin.

ment. Charles IV, in 1349, pawned the Jews to the Frankforters, but reserved to himself and his successors the right to exact parchment from them.

In Bible times the complete book was often sealed (Isa. xxix. 11, 12), perhaps to protect it from being fingered by readers and rubbed [תורה התומה נתנה] Gittin, 60a].

(b) Its SHAPE was a *Roll*; מִגֵּלֶת סֵפֶר (Jer. xxxvi) is an unwritten scroll. Ps. xl. 8 seems to support the Talmudic tradition that the Psalmist came into the Temple with the Scroll of the Law. On the Arch of Titus a scroll is being carried in the triumphal procession, cf. Josephus, *Bell.* VII, 5. 5. Jerome seems only to have known scrolls, and the Talmud describes a single one containing the whole תִּנָּךְ [Baba Bathra, 13. 6]. Each child had its scroll, and "the Romans, after the capture of Jerusalem, wrapped its school-children in their scrolls and burnt them," J. Taanith, 62 a, הָיוּ כּוֹרְבִים כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד בְּסֵפֶרוֹ וּשְׂוֹרְפִין אוֹתוֹ.

There was usually a stick at the beginning and an unwritten space sufficient to surround it, and at the end an unwritten space sufficient to surround the whole scroll (Baba Bathra, 13 b, 14 a). The ס"ת had two sticks. In the fourth century scrolls were still prevalent, and in a sixth-century picture Jeremiah is depicted unrolling a scroll, and Moses receives the law in the shape of a scroll. The codex, or modern book, first appeared in the third century. The Jews of antiquity had Hebrew books in the form of scrolls only. To open and close a book is לָלֵךְ, to roll, in Aramaic בִּנְךְ.

(c) LENGTH. It would seem that each biblical writing originally constituted a scroll for itself. Jeremiah was to write a scroll (xxxvi. 2, 32). The twelve minor poets were originally separate, but *because of their size* they have been regarded as one book ever since the first settlement of the canon. Sirach xlix. 10 talks of שְׁנֵים עָשָׂר הַנְּבִיאִים, Josephus, Talmud, and Midrash all treat them as one. But so far as authority went the whole of the Old Testament was as one. The Pentateuch scroll is only secondary to that of the whole Law, though it eventually superseded it by reason of its more manageable size. The division into five was arbitrary, but excellent, and was induced by size. The Massorites, and even Midrash, like the most modern of the Biblical critics, give other divisions.

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|-----------------------|--|
| Genesis is in 2 parts | (1) ס' בְּרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם or ס' יְצִירָה The Creation. |
| | (2) ס' הַיִּשְׂרָאֵל or ס' הַיִּשְׂרָאֵל The Patriarchs, |
| | Joshua xiii; 2 Sam. i. 18. |
| Exodus is in 3 parts | (3) ס' צִיָּאת מִצְרַיִם The Exodus. |
| | (4) Laws. |
| | (5) The erection of the Tabernacle. |

- Leviticus is in 2 parts (6) ס' תורת כהנים The Priests.
 (7) ס' הקרבנות The Sacrifices.
 Numbers is in 2 parts (8) ס' הפקודים Numbers.
 (9) ס' המסעות Journeyings.
 Deuteronomy is in 2 parts (10) ס' משנה תורה Recapitulation.
 (11) ס' פטירת משה Death of Moses.

Dr. Ginsburg (Introduction, p. 461) quotes from a Bible codex of the thirteenth century an evidently early tradition as to the Pentateuch:—

ס' ראשון והוא ס' בריאת העולם והיחם
 ס' שני והוא ס' יציאת מצרים ומתן תורה
 ס' שלישי והוא ס' תורת כהנים וקרבנות
 ס' רביעי והוא ס' הפקודים והמסעות
 ס' חמישי והוא ס' משנה תורה ופטירת משה

The division of the Pentateuch, then, was introduced out of technical considerations, but it occurs in the Samaritan Bible and is therefore at least as old as Ezra. The size, therefore, of a book about 400 B. C. would vary between that of Leviticus and Genesis. Dr. Blau then ingeniously adopts an edition of the British Bible Society as a pattern, and gives by the number of its pages the relative sizes of the books:—

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|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Genesis 36·3 | 10. Isaiah . . 18·5 + 13·5 = 32·5 |
| 2. Exodus 30·5 | Isaiah xl-xlvi is the work of |
| 3. Leviticus 22 | an unknown author, but its |
| 4. Numbers 31 | size, 13·5, was too small for an |
| 5. Deuteronomy. 27 | independent scroll and it |
| 6. Joshua 29 | went better with the shortest |
| 7. Judges 19 | of the Great Prophets than |
| Small and so in many Codices | with the Minor Prophets |
| Ruth accompanies it. | which which would have |
| 8. Samuel I and II 24·5 + 20·5 = 45·7 | become too bulky (29·5 + |
| Samuel and Kings are really | 13·5 = 43). |
| one. The LXX calls the | 11. Jeremiah 41 |
| whole Kings, and the division | 12. Ezekiel 37 |
| is purely mechanical, "mit | 13. The Twelve Prophets . 29·5 |
| der Scheere gemacht wor- | 14. Psalms 40 |
| den." Kings now begins | 15. Proverbs 22 |
| with a 1. | 16. Job 16 |
| 9. Kings I and II 24·5 + 23 = 47·5 | 17. Chronicles 48 |
| | 18. Ezra (Nehemiah) . . . 18 |

1-9 are in chronological order, and so with the later prophets, 10-13, in most MSS. and the five earliest editions. But with 13 the order is broken, and in Baba Bathra, 14 b, the reason given why the prophecy of Hosea does not head the list is because of its small size. And size seems the true reason—especially having regard to the RECEPTACLES in which the scrolls were kept. Ancient Hebrew books had no title, and the first author who gives his name was Jesus the son of Sirach. The nearest approach to a title was in Ezekiel's vision of a book, ii. 10.

Zechariah ix-xiv is attributed by Bible critics to two anonymous authors, and they with "Malachi," which is not a name, seem to have been appended to the Roll of the twelve prophets as fitting nowhere else. In the prophetic canon no anonymous writing is introduced as an independent work. Both passages begin מלאכי, and the only reason why they are not appended to Malachi would seem to be that they were always regarded as much older.

Dr. Blau, in his criticism of Dr. Ginsburg, in JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, XII, 223, points out that Ginsburg's subdivision into eight of the orders of the Hagiographa is reducible to three. Six MSS. follow the Talmud and give the order:—

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Ruth. | 7. Lamentations. |
| 2. Psalms. | 8. Daniel. |
| 3. Job. | 9. Esther. |
| 4. Proverbs. | 10. Ezra-Nehemiah. |
| 5. Ecclesiastes. | 11. Chronicles. |
| 6. Canticles. | |

Job is interposed between the Davidian and the Solomonian writings, but the order is otherwise chronological, perhaps David was regarded as the author of Job. But anyhow Job being poetical, had to join the poets. Dr. Blau argues as to the division of Chronicles and Ezra, "Die Chronik füllte eine Rolle, die Genesis und Exodus voll aufnehmen konnte," $36 + 30 = 48 + 18$.

In those MSS. in which Chronicles is the first of the Hagiographa, it is because of its size; size mattered less than chronology at a later date when the canon of the Hagiographa was fixed. The canon of the Prophets had been settled much earlier. Therefore in those MSS., Ezra-Nehemiah, from which Chronicles had been sundered, remains the last. They were sundered because of the great size (66) of the whole, but the division was on a chronological basis—pre-exilic and post-exilic. That they were originally one is proved by the identity of the two first verses of Ezra with the last two of Chronicles. Such catch-verses are found in classical MSS. and even on the tablets of Cuneiform inscriptions.

Psalms. The division of Psalms into five books is much more ancient than R. Chija (200 A. D.) who says (Kiddushin, 33a) that he taught Simon b. Juda the Patriarch two-fifths. And here (p. 59) there is perhaps a little inconsistency on the author's part. He says "Die Fünfteilung ist sehr beliebt geworden auch im Matthäusevangelium und bei Papias"; but a few pages earlier, in discussing the Pentateuch (p. 48), that the number five at least among the Jews was "keine heilige und sonst keine gebräuchliche," and therefore a fivefold division could only be induced by external considerations. Probably, however, the apparent inconsistency would be explained by Dr. Blau as due to the analogy of the Pentateuch, which, once divided into five, established a sacred precedent. But whatever the reason for dividing into five, why was it divided at all? The relative size of Psalms is 40 to the 36 of Genesis, so that on first thoughts it would not be too bulky, but as it was written in stichoi, and as the 147 Psalms had to be interspaced, and as, moreover, it was to be sung, and had therefore to be written in larger characters in order to be easily legible, its relative size would easily exceed 100, and five scrolls would be none too short. That the division was due to chronological considerations, and the first book the oldest and so on, Dr. Blau doubts, though he reserves discussion of the point for a future opportunity.

Ecclesiastes a separate Scroll.—The theory that there was an intermixture of the pages is rejected by Dr. Blau as it was separately written on a scroll. Such separate scrolls were the books Josephus took from the Romans. Luke xx. 42 talks of the βιβλος ψαλμῶν. משלי and תילים are books, brought to Rabbi Juda I (200 A. D.). ספר תילים אחד וס' איוב וממשלות—כתובה From Baba Bathra, 11a and 13b, we see that there were scrolls which contained the whole תנ"ך as well as the "eight prophets" and Hagiographa separately.

The original division was into two—תורה and קבלה, and תורה, מקרא and נביאים. כתובים and תנ"ך seems to have often been on one scroll. A fragment of a book, whether for paedagogic or other purposes, e. g. סוטה, is called מנלה if independent, and פרשה if regarded as part of a whole.

Esther was originally מנלה and the only book besides the Pentateuch admitted into the liturgy. Afterwards, besides the five scrolls one had מ' סתרים (J. Ber., 14a12), מ' חסידים, מ' סממנין, מנלה תענית (B. M., 92a). The order of study in Palestine was first לוחא (Tablet of Letters), then מנלה fragment, then a book, then the Bible. The order in Jelandenu (ed. Grünhut, *Likkutim*, V, 160) is לוחא מנלתא בראשית כל המקרא ששה סדרים תורת כהנים מכלתא תוספתא תלמוד ואגדתא.

And in Deut. R. c. 8, fol. 23 Wilna, ואח"כ בספר, תחלה קורא במני לה ואח"כ בכת' ואח"כ בנביאים ואח"כ בכת' משהו גומר את המקרא שונה את התלמוד ואח"כ בהלכות ואח"כ באגדות. Amulets containing Scripture texts were in vogue in the third century.

(d) **FORMAT.** The external size of books was mostly very *small*—the whole scroll could be held in one hand (Ezek. ii. 9). The ancient ס"ת looked like a man's arm and was carried about everywhere—its height equalled its circumference, and as there were 300,000 separate letters in the scroll the letters must have been small, and Jerome, in the fourth century, says that the Hebrew script was almost too small to be legible.

(e) **DISTRIBUTION.** Books were rare in Jehoshaphat's time, and in Ezra's, and in 1 Macc. iii. 48 we see that the Syrians searched for books, and Antiochus Epiphanes was the first confiscator. In the letter of the Jerusalemites to their Egyptian brethren, we read that "Judas gathered all the books which had been scattered during the war (against the Syrians), and they are now with us. If you want any, send for them" (2 Macc. ii. 14, 15). With the Pharisees and their love for the letter the production of copies of the law greatly increased. On the Day of Atonement, after the High Priest's blessing, each man brought his Torah from his house and read it in the Temple to show it off (Joma, 70a) ואח"כ כל אחד ואחד מביא ס"ת מביתו וקורא בו כדי להראות חזותו לרבים. Every community had a collection of scrolls always, often private individuals. Even found books were to be tenderly treated and not too often read for fear of being rubbed (J. Baba Metzia, 8d8)—each scholar wrote his own scroll. Even heathens possessed them, and sometimes wrote them, and they might be used. Children could use Samaritan bibles, which were like the Jews', except that Deut. xi. 30 adds שכם. One might buy but not sell Torahs. Jerome talks of collections, and cases, and cupboards of books and "Jewish Archives" ("de Archivis Judaeorum"). The text was preserved by the care and reverence in which the Scrolls were held, and if one were burnt the Jew mourned as for a parent.

(f) **THE OLDEST CODICES**, tradition said, were the thirteen written by Moses for each tribe. Levi's was preserved in the Ark; Jeremiah preserved the Scrolls from fire; Ezra restored them. In Mur, near Kahira, is a codex said to have been written by Ezra, but Sirach xlix. 13 sings not of Ezra but of Nehemiah. Sirach xliv mentions all the sacred books of the Temple Archives, and Josephus (*Arch.* V, 1. 17) says that they were preserved in the Temple and carried in Titus's triumph. Aristaeas and Demetrios witness how corrupt Egyptian codices of the Pentateuch were till Ptolemy borrowed the Temple Codices. The

Other Codices were those of the scribe R. Meir and Severus (vide Epstein in Chwolson's Festschrift), also the Psalters of R. Chijja and R. Chanin bar Rab, J. Megilla [72 a 7 J. Succa, 53 d]. Papyrus scrolls could last, in Galen's opinion, not more than 300 years, leather was more durable, but not the ink. The book-worm *מַקָּק* and the mouse were the enemies of the book, but they were protected by their traditional sanctity *טומאתן היא חבתן* [Jadaim, IV, 6].

II.

THE INNER FORM OF OLD HEBREW BOOKS.

1. COLUMNS AND MARGINS—"Opisthography," i. e. writing on both sides, occurred in private writings but not in the Scriptures. Ezek. ii. 10 is a witness to its rarity. A column was a door *דלת* or *דף*. In J. Meg., 71 d and Menachot, 39 a the space to be left between two columns is a thumb-breadth *גורל מלוא גורל*; *בין דף לרף מלוא גורל*; the space between two books of the Pentateuch should be four lines, between two of the minor prophets three. In a scroll of the Prophets one may begin at the beginning of a column and end at the end, but in the minor prophets in the middle (so as to avoid the scroll being afterwards divided). The width of a column should be three times *למשפחתים*. Of the dilatable letters *אהלתם* there is of course no trace so early. In Tosifta Sabb., 13. 5 (129 a) *אותן אין מצילין אותן* would seem to mean *not* margins but *evangelium*. Further on in the same passage is a reference to Ben Sira and other books. Dr. Blau accounts for the incorporation with Isaiah of the second Isaiah by the fact that the one may have ended and the other begun a new column; but when he similarly accounts for the constituents of Zechariah, "*Dasselbe ist auch von den Anhängseln des Zecharia anzunehmen*" (p. 120), he seems to overlook the rule on p. 117, "*Innerhalb des Zwölfprophetenbuches jedoch ist dies verboten*." Apparently a strip contained three columns, Tosifta Baba Mezia, 2. 21, says that in a found book one may only open three columns at a time, and when books were made, three columns on the page seemed to be usual, e. g. the earliest Syriac MS. of 411; and St. Lucian at the end of the third century left the Church of Nicomedia a bible *γεγραμμένον σελίδι τρισσαῖς*. Mediaeval MSS. often have commentary on either side of the text, and our Talmuds are still so printed. What was the number of columns in a *ס'ת*? From a passage in J. Megilla, 71 c at least twenty columns seem to have been usual.

The normal height of a scroll was 6 hand-breadths, the upper and lower margin 7 finger-breadths, so that the column was 4 hand-breadths and 1 finger-breadth high = 7.5 centimetres \times $4\frac{1}{5}$ = 31.5 cm.

In *Soferim*, a post-Talmudic treatise of Palestinian origin, Jose b. Judah of the second century gives the minimum height of a column as 6 to 8 finger-breadths, and the breadth 2 thumb-breadths, and the space between the columns is half that, i. e. 1 thumb-breadth.

The length of a line = width of scroll, was thought by Lambert and Büchler to be 7 or 8 words of 27 to 32 letters, like the *Letteris* edition of the Bible.

Virgil's hexameters contain 32-42 letters, and average 36 to 9. Homer's average 37.7 letters. Oldest Hebrew verses are the stichoi of **אמ**, Job, Proverbs, Psalms. The alphabetical acrostics in Psalms ix, xxv, xxxiv, xxxvii, cxix, cxi, cxlv give 26 to 32 letters, and some elegiacs only 20 to 22 letters.

Job is a *written* book, not a book of hymns to be sung. The poems in the first book of Maccabees and Ben Sira were written in stichoi—and the stichoi form of the newly discovered Hebrew text is evidence of its genuineness. The average verse line of Job is 26, exactly the amount required by the *Baraita* to *Menachoth*. Poetical passages had to be written **אריה על גבי לבנה** brickwise,—so as to distinguish them from prose? for even prose had not lines of the same length until **אהלתם** became dilatable.

MS. Or. 4445 B. M. of the ninth century has 3 cols. of 21 ll. of 10 letters.

MS. Petersburg Prophets of 916 „ 2 „ 21 „ 15 „

Of the eighteen facsimiles of Ginsburg's Hebrew Bible (London, 1898), most have 3 columns, only one of the seventeenth century has 1 column, the line has only once more than 40 and generally less than 30 letters. Evidently the codex or book imitated the scroll.

How many lines had the column? Büchler, from *Soferim* and *Massora*, infers 42 as normal, but 60, 72, and 98 occur. The *Pentateuch* has 304,000 letters, i. e. 10,133 lines of 30 letters, i. e. 241 columns of 42 letters, i. e. 25 yards, which is far too much; therefore the column must have contained 72 lines of 30 to 32 cm. high and less than 4 finger-breadths wide, so the writing must have been very tiny.

2. LINEATION AND LINES.—J. Meg., 71 d 9 **למשה מסיני שיהיו כעורות וכותבין בדי** “It is a Halacha from Moses on Sinai to write on leather with ink **בקנה** and to rule (*regula* = **סרגל**) with a reed.” No “book” is without lineation, not even Adam's. The books of *Herculaneum* were also ruled, and so the *Codex Alexandrinus* (fifth century). In gold-writing the lines consisted of silver points or dots. Hai Gaon (1000) says Bible quotations are punctuated. He found this in writings of the *Seboraim* in 500, and this was usual in the Orient till the sixteenth century. In Schechter's texts, *J. Q. R.*, XIV, 456-474, such quotations are punctuated. The

same punctuation occurs in E. N. Adler's "An Eleventh Century Introduction to the Hebrew Bible" (*J. Q. R.*, IX, 687) and has been remarked upon by Professor David Kaufmann (ib., X, 162). Interlineations were always above and not below the line. כדרלעמר and בתהיענה may each be written as two words and the latter on two lines. R. Eleazar b. Jose (c. 200) saw the priest's mitre and curtain in Rome, and denied that קרש ל was written on one line and the Tetragrammaton above it (Sab. 636).

3. CHARACTER AND WRITING.—Archaic nations regarded writing as a miracle. Judges viii. 14 shows how common it was in Bible times. Jeremiah xxxvi. 18 first mentions ink (Isa. xxxviii. 9 for מרתב read מרתם). All ancient codices were written over, inked again "aufgefrischt." Gold-writing, χρυσογράφου, is mentioned in Aristæus as having been used in the copies of the Law sent by the High Priest to Ptolemy. Swete denies this, and Abrahams, with Löw, suggests that only the name of God may have been written in gold¹. Canticles v. 14, as interpreted in Schir Rabba, I, 11 (226 Wilna) או שכתב ר' א תורי זהב נעשה לה זה הכתב, hypothecates gold-writing of texts with silver dots or lines עם נקורות הכסף זה חסרגל. That gold-writing was forbidden seems due to historical rather than religious reasons, the Pharisees objected to the sumptuary extravagances of the aristocratic Sadducees, and Jerome also objects to gold, Sabbath, 103 b או שכתב או שכתב בריו או שכתב את האזכרות בזהב הרי אלו יגנוו בתורתן של אלכסנדרים. Illiterates had to sign their names as witnesses to a "Get" and so they wrote over their names in red ink or their names were written and cut out of fresh paper and they filled the interstices with black ink. Omissions were "hung" (תולין) over the line—even whole verses could be thus omitted and afterwards replaced, perhaps in the wrong place. The four "hung" letters of the Massora are the earliest traces of this. Only one side of the skin was written on. "Opisthography," i.e. writing on both sides, is only once alluded to in Scripture (Ezek. ii. 10).

תיבה דקה thin writing is a characteristic of the לבלר = *libellarius* or scribe—and a proof of the minuscular writing of antiquity. Writing-materials were as follows: for the schoolboy a *style* consisting of a כותב on one side and מוחק (eraser) on the other; for the scribe קסת הסופר = *καλαμάριον* or קולמוס. The inkstand was קסת הסופר = *καλαμάριον* once בית דיו קאלמרין.

¹ Dr. Gaster, in his sumptuous *Hebrew Illuminated Bibles* (London, Harrison, 1901), also discusses the question.

III.

PRESERVATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF OLD HEBREW BOOKS.

1. MANTLES AND DEPOSITORIES.—The scroll was generally wrapped in silk. It might not be touched with the naked hand. In a bedroom it had to be kept under cover, or behind a curtain, or in the window. The curtain of an ark might be used to cover a ס"ת. The mantle was called מנפחת (which is also the Biblical word for a lady's cloak). It was of silk, wool, linen, leather, or paper. תיק הספרים (Tos. Jadajim, II, 11) seems to have been a leather case, in which scroll with mantle was placed.

In the second Temple there was no ark. The ארון or תיבה, in which the scroll was kept, is inferred to have been about a man's size, from a Talmudic quotation (Berachot, 47 b ?) תשעה וארון מצטרפים וארון נברא הוא. But the inference seems far-fetched. There were three kinds of ark, מנדל, תיבה, שירה, made of brass, bone, leather, glass or wool, and on a stand. The case with rollers occurs on Christian monuments (Schultze, *Rolle und Codex*). On cemeterial frescoes of the third century Jesus sits with a case containing scrolls at his feet, or with a scroll in his left hand, and on Jewish gilt glass (Goldgläsern) of the third century we frequently find pictures of the "armarium judaicum" or κιβωτός, the ark or receptacle for generally six recumbent scrolls. Pictures of these have lately appeared in the Jewish Encyclopaedia (*sub voce* Ark), and Jacobs [*J. Q. R.*, XIV, 737], has pointed out that this was the usual form of a Roman bookcase.

2. SCRIBES AND CORRECTORS.—The first biblical scribe was Jeremiah's Baruch, but Ezra was the first copyist who supplied many copies. In Talmud times there was no longer a priestly caste of scribes—though the earliest were priests. Pesachim, 57 a אי לי מבית קדרום אי לי, מקילמוסן, cf. Luke i. 62, shows discouragement of an attempt on the priest's part to keep caligraphy a family secret. But סופרים were a profession like notaries; R. Meir was the greatest. Huna wrote 70 ס"ת, R. Ammi 400. The סופר was also a לבלר but the לבלר was not necessarily an official. To write and lend books was meritorious. The corrector had to read aloud, and the scribe had to read the original also—hence many of the textual errors through similarity of sound. The לבלר like the libellio, was despised.

In order to preserve the original text the correctors were paid by the Temple treasury and had to correct all copies by the Model Codex. The king's copy was corrected by the highest three tribunals. Nobody might keep an uncorrected book in his house

more than thirty days. If a verse of four lines was omitted, the page or skin was spoilt and had to be replaced by another.

3. BOOKSELLING AND PRICES OF BOOKS.—Prophets, and even Sirach (xxxix. 9; xxxviii. 33), were orators not writers. The oral law was forbidden to be written. But in the letter of the Palestine to the Egyptian Jews (2 Macc. ii. 15) of the books which Judas Maccabeus collected they say, "if you want any books send for them and have copies made."

The first bookseller must have been the copyist. The scribe in Talmud times made books to order. A heathen, in J. A. z., 41 a 14, is said to have had books in stock for sale. A wise man might buy them of him, but not a layman. Heirloom ס"ד should not be sold. Apocrypha and Agada could not have been frequent or the Hebrew originals would not have been lost. (For the literature as to book-selling in Greece and Rome, vide Wattenbach, 535, and Dziatko in *Pauly Wissouk*, III, 939, and Birt, 103, 357, 433, 504. Rome was the chief emporium of MSS., as Italy still is of Hebrew MSS.) Old books went to the Geniza, not to the second-hand bookseller. The grave is not likely to give up its literary Hebrew treasures like a papyrus buried in a necropolis. Why not?

As to prices, a ס"ד bought for 80 was sold for 120 zuz in the year 330. An ordinary ס"ד cost about 70s. ס"ד in 250 fetched 5 mana = 300s. Esther in 337 1 zuz.

Babylonian parchment was dear. For Jewish dealers in parchment in Spain vide Jacobs, *J. Q. R.*, VI, 600. For a tax on parchment of Jews, vide Steinschneider, *Kunde der hebr. HSS.* 17. A small house cost 6s., a labourer in a vineyard was paid 1 denar = .6 of a shilling. A ס"ד was thought worth about 3 or 4 hectares of a field, and Esther cost a day's wages of a vineyard labourer, vide Herzfeld, *Handels-geschichte der Juden des Alterthums*.

ELKAN N. ADLER.